

Professional Pipe Welders: Safety and Security in the Nuclear Welding Industry **Florence-Darlington Technical College (FDTC)**

Executive Summary

Florence-Darlington Technical College (FDTC), in Florence, South Carolina, proposes to provide the southeastern region with innovative educational and recruitment programs to attract and prepare a new generation of welders to move the southeast safely forward with planned nuclear energy production. The *Professional Pipe Welders: Safety and Security in the Nuclear Welding Industry* program requests **\$150,000** to offer fellowships to expand the college's new Pipe Welding Academy. FDTC offers the only stand-alone pipe welding program in the Pee Dee region of South Carolina which must grow and be customized to include nuclear safety and nuclear security to meet the growing and specific needs of the region's nuclear power producers. The *Professional Pipe Welders* program is necessary to increase the numbers of regional pipe welders certified to work in the nuclear industry, attract more diverse and talented students, and produce a workforce capable of supporting the nuclear power production industry.

FDTC is uniquely positioned to address the welding workforce development needs of existing nuclear power facilities while introducing the whole new welding frontier to a population of younger students and incumbent workers to support growth and new construction in the industry. The **goal** of the *Professional Pipe Welders* program is to develop a professional pipe welding workforce capable of constructing and maintaining the infrastructure that is crucial to the operation of nuclear facilities and the safe handling of nuclear materials to meet the growing and specific needs of the region's nuclear power producers. **Objectives** are to: (1) Attract, enroll, and certify 50 nuclear pipe welding (including robotic and automated welding) students for employment within 12 months; and, (2) Develop and employ an innovative recruiting and marketing plan to have the diversity of the *Professional Pipe Welders* program mirror the diversity of the region.